

NEWS RELEASE



a division of the
DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC SAFETY

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Colonel Jerry E. Adams, Commissioner

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: Jefferson City, Missouri

Memorial Day weekend is the unofficial kick off to what is typically a very busy summer boating season. Missouri State Water Patrol Colonel Jerry Adams wants to welcome everyone back to Missouri's waterways. This may be a belated welcome to many boaters who have already been enjoying Missouri's lakes and rivers for the past few months despite the stormy spring weather. For many boaters, however, Memorial Day weekend is the beginning of a fun-filled summer enjoying one of Missouri's greatest natural resources, state waterways.

After the long winter off the water, it is important for all boaters to review Missouri's boating laws. Here are a few reminders to make your time on the water safer:

1. Make sure you have your lifejacket. This reminder is number one on our list for good reason. Your life jacket is the single most important piece of safety equipment on your boat. Life jackets must be Coast Guard-approved and in serviceable condition (not torn or water logged). They must also be the proper size for the person who will wear it. And finally, life jackets must be accessible. This means that they should not be stored in closed or locked compartments. The Missouri State Water Patrol highly recommends you wear your life jacket. Our motto is "Make it Click".
2. Motor boats are required to carry a fire extinguisher. Be sure to check the charge on your fire extinguisher at the beginning of each boating season to make sure that it has not lost its charge over the winter.
3. Boats over 16 feet are required to carry a type 4 personal flotation device (PFD). This is a throwable device that must also be Coast Guard-approved. The type 4 PFD can be ring style or seat cushion style. The latter seems to be the most popular.

4. Check your lights before you go out at night. Some of the most dangerous situations that Water Patrol officers see are boats without lights. Turn on your lights before you leave the dock or boat ramp to make sure they are all working properly. It is also a good idea to carry extra light bulbs and fuses as well as a flashlight in case you have a light outage on the water.
5. You must slow down at night. The night time speed limit is 30 miles per hour (mph). Since the implementation of the 30 mph speed limit several years ago, there has been a significant reduction in night time boating accidents, especially ones that involve deaths or serious injuries. Help us keep the water safe at night by obeying the night time speed limit.
6. Drugs and alcohol mixed with boat operation can be a deadly combination. The Water Patrol has a zero tolerance policy when it comes to intoxicated boat operators and the use of illegal drugs on Missouri's waterways. Use a designated driver.

These have been just a few reminders to get ready for the summer. If you would like to review all of Missouri's boating laws, please pick up a Missouri Water Craft Manual from your local marina or Water Patrol officer. Or, you can view the manual on-line on the Water Patrol's home page at www.mswp.state.mo.us.

Unfortunately, during this exciting time when boaters are preparing for an enjoyable summer on Missouri's waterways, we must all remember that we remain under the threat of terrorism. Our country is now under an orange alert. This means that law enforcement officers are on high alert and will be increasing patrols in areas that could be potential terrorist targets. It is extremely important that all citizens, including the boating community, be continually vigilant in watching for suspicious activities. The Water Patrol will have all officers patrolling the state's lakes and rivers during Memorial Day weekend and throughout the summer boating season. Water Patrol officers will be increasing their patrol around infrastructure identified as possible terrorist targets during this time of high alert.

Colonel Jerry Adams wants to wish everyone a safe and enjoyable boating season and hopes that all boaters will remember to "BOAT SAFE, BOAT SMART, and BOAT SOBER".

Watch the Missouri State Water Patrol homepage at www.mswp.state.mo.us for updates on Boating Safety Courses in your area.

MISSOURI STATE WATER PATROL
Telephone (573) 751-3333
Home Page <http://www.mswp.state.mo.us>